



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

From sampling tasty gourmet chocolates to judging vaqueros on their rodeo skills, the next few months are filled with such a wonderful variety of events that both residents and visitors will be sure to appreciate the Grand Canyon State's amazing cultural diversity!

Enjoy great events such as Glendale's Chocolate Affaire, the Arizona's Annual Renaissance Festival in Apache Junction, Tubac's Festival of the Arts, Winter Blast 20: Light Up the Night in Lake Havasu, Tucson's Gem & Mineral Show, the All-Arabian Horse Show in Scottsdale, Sierra Vista's Cochise Cowboy Poetry & Music Gathering, Gold Rush Days in Wickenburg, the World Championship Hoop Dance Contest in Phoenix, Accenture Match Play Golf Championship in Marana, Tucson's La Fiesta de los Vaqueros, the International Film Festival in Sedona, the Waste Management Phoenix Open in Scottsdale...and that's just for the month of February!

So, be sure to tell your visitors (and don't forget to attend some of these yourself!) of all the great events that can be found throughout Arizona.

Look for even more events including arts and entertainment, sporting events, fairs and festivals, nature walks, kids' exhibits and so much more at the Calendar of Events section of [Arizona Guide.com](#)!

Also, congratulations to the Boulders Resort for celebrating its 25th anniversary! We look forward to another year of working with the resort to bring visitors to Arizona.

Have a great week.

AOT News

SAVE the DATE: 6th Annual Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner – March 11, 2010

The Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner will be held Wednesday, March 11, at Chase Field. The event is a major fundraiser for the Arizona Tourism Alliance, but also honors individuals for their extraordinary support and service to Arizona's travel and tourism industry. The Unity Dinner is a wonderful event that brings together public and private tourism industry organizations and elected officials from across the state to celebrate tourism. For ticket information, please visit www.aztourismalliance.org.

AOT Activities

Reach the Mexican Market at the 4th Annual Arizona Road Show

AOT will target Mexican tour operators and media at the 4th Annual Arizona Road Show to be held in Mexico City, March 16 - 18, 2010. The Road Show will highlight a screening of the Grand Canyon IMAX Movie, tour operator sales calls and dinner in Mexico City for key media representatives and tour operators. Registration cost is \$500, all other expenses are extra. For more information please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or via e-mail at lbelenio@azot.gov.

Toronto Golf Show Participation Opportunity

AOT will exhibit at the 21st annual Toronto Golf & Travel Show on March 5-7, 2010. The golf expo is held each year at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and attracts more than 30,000 Canadian golf enthusiasts. Exhibitors include golf outfitters, equipment manufacturers and suppliers, golf schools, golf travel companies and destinations. Join us in our exhibit at the show or we are pleased to offer brochure distribution for your golf travel product. Space is limited. For more information please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

American Bus Association Marketplace – January 15-19, 2010

AOT participated in the annual Marketplace for the American Bus Association (ABA). It was held at the Gaylord in National Harbor, MD near Washington, DC. ABA's Marketplace is an annual event to network and enhance group travel business. The core of Marketplace week is the face-to-face, seven-minute prescheduled appointments, where motorcoach and tour operators obtain destination information and create business relationships with destinations, hotels, attractions, and many other travel industry services throughout North America. Jennifer Sutcliffe, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager attended the event and met with buyers in 43 pre-scheduled, one-on-one appointments.

Other DMOs and suppliers from around Arizona also attended obtaining requests and leads for business for their regions. Also featured at Marketplace are educational seminars that run concurrently throughout the week to hone personal and professional skills as well as obtain credits towards professional certification, foundation fundraising events and volunteering opportunities, making this a tremendous, week-long networking opportunity. More than 2,000 delegates attended Marketplace, including nearly 300 motorcoach and tour companies. For

more information about the ABA Marketplace event and an appointment report, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[Visit USA Consumer Shows - Germany](#)

Date: January – March 2010

Location: Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart

[Descubre Phoenix 3rd Annual Golf Tournament](#)

Date: February 2010

Location: Hermosillo, Mexico

[Japan Solo Sales Mission](#)

Date: February 2010

Location: Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka, Japan

Industry News

Don't Cancel your Spa Treatment Yet

Luxury hotel stays are coming back this year, predict some of the largest US owners, according to The Wall Street Journal. "Rumors of the demise of luxury are greatly exaggerated," said Frits van Paasschen, president and chief executive of hotel operator Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. "I think you're going to see luxury pop in 2010," said Minaz Abji, executive vice president of hotel owner Host Hotels Resorts, which owns 112 hotels as a real estate investment trust. "The booking pace for '11 and '12 is holding up very well."

No lodging segment has suffered as much as luxury hotels. From 2007 to 2009, occupancy in US luxury hotels declined by 10.4 percentage points to 62.2 percent, according to Smith Travel Research. But reduced rates helped soften the blow. Some of that occupancy rebound can be attributed to low rates that will slip even more this year, says the Journal.

PKF foresees average rates at US luxury hotels declining by 1.9 percent this year to \$237. In 2011, luxury rates will rise by two percent, PKF says. Experts such as Bjorn Hanson, an associate professor of hospitality at New York University, however, predict it will take seven to 10 years for luxury hotels to again post the occupancy and rates they boasted at the market's peak. *(TravelMole e-newsletter, Jan. 19)*

Despite Lower Revenues, SWA Reported 4th Quarter Profit

Despite slightly lower revenues, Southwest Airlines reported a fourth-quarter profit of \$116 million. The carrier's net income is up compared to a 2008 fourth-quarter loss of \$56 million. Revenues for the quarter declined 0.8% to \$2.71 billion compared to \$2.73 billion in the same

period last year. For the full year, Southwest reported a \$99 million income, which was down 44% from its 2008 net income of \$178 million. (*www.Star-Telegram.com/Business; Pages B3, Wall Street Journal; 2B, USA Today; Travel Advance, Jan. 22*)

U.S. Travel Sees Leadership Void at TSA

Following the withdrawal of Erroll Southers from consideration to lead the Transportation Security administration, the U.S. Travel Association said that further delay in naming a leader for the TSA was unacceptable. Southers, the Obama administration's nominee, withdrew his candidacy after delays in Senate action (*TA, 1/21*). "Further delays is unacceptable," said U.S. Travel's president and CEO Roger Dow. "We are deeply disappointed that it took eight months to have a nominee and four more months for him to be considered at a time America's transportation system is obviously under threat. Northwest Flight 253 (the Christmas Day bombing attempt) serves as a wake-up call that we have critical security issues that must be addressed. We demand a fast-track nomination and immediate Senate consideration so we can put a leader for this critical agency in place as soon as possible," Dow said. (*www.TravelAgentCentral.com, 1/21; Special to TA; Travel Advance, Jan. 22*)

U.S. Airlines Generate Millions from Higher Bag Fees

Airlines are charging baggage fees and finding that, because of those fees, fewer passengers are checking bags, according to IdeaWorks, which is tracking the fees. That could be the reason behind recent baggage fee increases announced by several major airlines. IdeaWorks estimates these carriers will realize annual baggage fee revenue of \$1.76 billion. The "new money" portion of this amount for the group of "Big Five" carriers exceeds \$117 million. Southwest Airlines, which has positioned itself above the fray by promising "bags fly free," is a large and vocal holdout. The carrier's current advertising campaign virtually assures it will remain on the sidelines for some time. (*www.TravelPulse.com, 1/21; Travel Advance, Jan. 22*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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